

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
30 January 1985

Foot- notes

Intelligence records from World War II that until now have been largely closed to the public are being opened at the National Archives and Records Service. The Central Intelligence Agency is releasing to the Archives operational records of the Office of Strategic Services, the C.I.A.'s predecessor.

The records were reviewed and declassified by the C.I.A. in 1979-80, but the C.I.A. and the Archives could not agree on how much of the material could be opened to the public. The C.I.A. wanted tougher restrictions on access to the O.S.S. files than the archivists would accept.

Some scholars were able to request individual O.S.S. documents under the Freedom of Information Act, but the bulk of the records remained closed.

In 1983, however, the director of the C.I.A., William Casey, facilitated the transfer of the documents to the Archives.

J. Kenneth McDonald, chief of the historical staff at the C.I.A., says only 4 to 5 per cent of the O.S.S. operational records have been withheld as classified. Some 190 cubic feet of records have already been transferred to the Archives, and roughly another 2,500 cubic feet are to come.

The records now open at the Archives include the reports of the survivors of the intelligence teams that parachuted into France before D-Day to work with the French resistance.

The documents also include records relating to secret intelligence operations from 1942 to 1945 in Rome, Singapore, Burma, and other areas of Europe and Asia. In addition there are the files of the foreign nationalities branch, which gathered information on foreign nationals in Europe and America, for the years from 1941 to 1946.

Finally, the cache contains the records of the morale operations branch, including such items as the recordings made by singer-actress Marlene Dietrich, in German, to demoralize German troops.

The Archives are anticipating that scholars will make heavy use of the O.S.S. records. They can be requested from the Modern Military Branch at the Archives.